



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE JOURNAL OF NEGRO HISTORY

VOL. II—JANUARY, 1917—No. 1

SLAVERY AND THE SLAVE TRADE IN AFRICA

I. THE ORIGIN AND EXTENT OF SLAVERY IN THE SEVERAL ECONOMIC ZONES OF AFRICA

Slavery in Africa has existed from time immemorial, having arisen, not from any outside influence, but from the very nature of the local conditions. The three circumstances necessary to develop slavery are:

First, a country favored by the bounty of nature. Unless nature yields generously it is impossible for a subject class to produce surplus enough to maintain their masters. Where nature is niggardly, as in many hunting districts, the labor of all the population is required to meet the demands of subsistence.

Second, a country where the labor necessary to subsistence is, in some way, very disagreeable. In such cases every man and woman will seek to impose the task of production upon another. Among most primitive agricultural peoples, the labor necessary to maintenance is very monotonous and uninteresting, and no freeman will voluntarily perform it. On the contrary, among hunting and fishing peoples, the labor of maintenance is decidedly interesting. It partakes of the nature of sport.

Third, a country where there is an abundance of free land. In such a country it is impossible for one man to secure another to work for him except by coercion; for when

a man has a chance to use free land and its products he will work only for himself, and take all the product for himself rather than work for another and accept a bare subsistence for himself. On the contrary, where all the land is appropriated a man who does not own land has no chance to live except at the mercy of the landlord. He is obliged to offer himself as a wage-earner or a tenant. The landlord can obtain, therefore, all the help he may need without coercion. Free labor is then economically advantageous to both the landlord and the wage-earner, since the freedom of the latter inspires greatly increased production. From these facts and considerations, verified by history, it may be laid down as a sociological law that where land is monopolized slavery necessarily yields to a regime of freedom.¹

In applying these principles to Africa it is necessary to take account of the natural division of the continent into distinct economic zones. Immediately under the equator is a wide area of heavy rainfall and dense forest. The rapidity and rankness of vegetable growth renders the region unsuited to agriculture. But the plentiful streams abound in fish and the forests in animals and fruits. The banana and plantain grow there in superabundance, and form the chief diet of the inhabitants. This may be called, for convenience, the banana zone. To the north and south of this zone are broad areas of less rainfall and forest, with a dry season suitable to agriculture. These may be called the agriculture zones. Still further to the north and south are areas of very slight rainfall and almost no forests, suitable for pasturage. Here cattle flourish in great numbers. These may be called the pastoral zones. These zones stretch horizontally across the continent except in case of the cattle zones, which, on account of the mountainous character of East Africa, include the plateau extending from Abyssinia to the Zambesi river. Each of these zones gives rise to different types of men, and different characteristics of economic organization, of family life, government, religion, and art.

¹ Nieboer, "Slavery as an Industrial System," 257-348.

In the banana zone nature is extremely bountiful. The people subsist mostly upon the spontaneous products. A small expenditure of effort will support a vast population. Agriculture is very little practiced. Here the effort to live would seem to be easier and more agreeable than in any other part of the world, so that man would not be under pressure to enslave his kind. But alas, the work of gathering and transporting the fruits, of the preparation and cooking them, as well as the bringing home and cooking of the game, the building of houses, etc., is not altogether pleasant. It is uninteresting, and the heat and the humidity of the climate render it almost insupportable in certain seasons and hours of the day. The repugnance to labor of tropical people, whether natives or white immigrants, is proverbial. Every one in the banana zone, therefore, seeks to shift his burden upon another. As a first resort, he unloads it upon his wife, and she, finding it grievous, cries out, and he then relieves her by procuring additional wives. This kind of wife-slavery suffices for the support of the population in this zone, but in the case of families of rank, who have been accustomed to some degree of luxury, other helpers are needed, and these form a class of domestic slaves. Now, in this zone, the climatic conditions not only render labor disagreeable but tend to curb aspiration, so that people do not acquire a taste or demand for products which minister to the higher nature. Lassitude keeps the standard of living down to a low level. Hence, in this zone the labor of women suffices, for the most part, for the maintenance of the population. Since land is free and no one will voluntarily work for another, such additional workers as are needed must be obtained and bound to the master by coercion.

In this zone two very remarkable consequences follow from the fact that very few slaves are needed for workers. The first is the practice of cannibalism, once universal in this zone, and still in vogue throughout vast regions. The bountiful food supply attracts immigrants from all sides, and the result is a condition of chronic warfare. When one tribe defeats another the question arises, What is to be

done with the prisoners? As they cannot be profitably employed as industrial workers, they are used to supplement a too exclusive vegetable diet. Wars come to be waged expressly for the sake of obtaining human flesh for food. The Monbuttu eat a part of their captives fallen in battle, and butcher and carry home the rest for future consumption. They bring home prisoners not to reduce to slavery but as butcher-meat to garnish future festivals.

A second consequence of the limited demand for slaves is that war captives are sold to foreigners. Adjacent to the banana zone are zones of agriculture, where slaves are in great request, and, during the European connection with the slave trade, the normal demand for slaves in this zone was greatly heightened. Among the Niam Niam all prisoners belong to the monarch. He sells the women and keeps the children for slaves. Hence, the banana zone has been the great reservoir for supplying slaves to other parts of the world. Hundreds of thousands of slaves came from this zone to the West Indies, and to the slave states of North and South America. In Dahomey and Ashanti war captives used to be sold "en bloc" to white traders at so much per capita.

In the agricultural zones to the north and south nature is more niggardly, though she yields enough, when coaxed by the hoe, to permit of a large class of parasites. The labor of maintenance is more onerous than in the banana zone. While the heat and humidity are not so great the work is more grievous because of its greater quantity and monotony. The motive to shift the work is, therefore, very strong and the demand for slaves is very great. In fact, the ratio of slaves to freemen is about three or four to one. As land is free and the resources open, the only means of obtaining workers is by coercion. The supply of slaves is kept up by kidnapping, by warfare upon weak tribes, by the purchase of children from improvident parents, and by forfeiture of freedom through crime.

In the cattle zones farther to the north and south, nature is still less bountiful. The labor of maintenance re-

quires a combination of the pastoral art, agriculture and trade. A slave class could not maintain itself and at the same time support a large master class. The labor of a large proportion of the population is, in one way or another, necessary to existence. The nature of the work, so far as it is pastoral or trading, is not especially irksome, but rather fascinating. Tending cattle is full of excitement, and is a kind of substitute for hunting; while trading is an occupation which appeals with wonderful force to all the races of Africa. The impulse to shift labor in the cattle zones is, therefore, very slight, except in the case of a few populations subsisting largely upon agriculture. The ruling classes, therefore, instead of owning many personal slaves, make a practice of subjugating the agricultural groups in such a way as to constitute a kind of feudalism. As land is free the enslaved groups can be made to serve the free class only by coercion.

Similar conditions among the natural races all over the world give rise in the same way to the institution of slavery. Ellis thinks that slavery probably originated under the regime of exogamy where the sons born of captured women formed the slave class because they were considered inferior to the sons born of the women of the group.² But it is quite evident that slavery originated primarily from economic conditions. For further sociological explanations of slavery in the several zones the reader is referred to the author's first and second volumes on the Negro races.

II. THE SLAVE TRADE OF WEST AFRICA AND THE DESERT OF SAHARA

The African slave trade goes back as far as our knowledge of the Negro race. The first Negroes of which we have any record were probably slaves brought in caravans to Egypt. They were in demand as slaves in all the oases of the deserts, and along the coasts of the Mediterranean. "Among the ruling nations on the north coast," says Heeren, "the Egyptians, Cyrenians and Carthaginians, slavery was

² "The Ewé Speaking Peoples," 222.

not only established but they imported whole armies of slaves, partly for home use, and partly, at least by the latter, to be shipped off to foreign markets. These wretched beings were chiefly drawn from the interior, where kidnapping was just as much carried on then as it is at present. Black male and female slaves were even an article of luxury, not only among the above mentioned nations, but even in Greece and Italy; and as the allurements to this traffic was on this account so great, the unfortunate Negro race had, even thus early, the wretched fate to be dragged into distant lands under the galling yoke of bondage.”³ Since the introduction of Mohammedanism, slaves have been carried eastward into all of the Moslem States as far as Asia Minor and Turkey, where they are still much valued as domestic servants or as eunuchs to guard the seraglios of Mohammedan princes. In the middle ages many African slaves were carried into Spain through the instrumentality of the Saracens, and from there the first slaves were imported into America. The supply of slaves for the Northern and Eastern States was obtained chiefly from the region of the Sudan. At an early period many caravan routes led northward from this region.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the slaves were obtained by a variety of methods, of which the most common was that of raiding the agricultural Nigritians who lived in towns and cities scattered and unorganized in the agricultural zone, and who were easy victims of the mounted bands of desert Berbers, Tuaregs and Arabs who descended into the region in quest of booty and captives. Robert Adams, an American sailor who was wrecked on the West Coast of Africa in 1810, said of the raiding parties sent out from Timbuktu, “These armed parties were all on foot except the officers. They were usually absent from one week to a month, and at times brought in considerable numbers,” mostly from the Bambaras. “The slaves thus brought in were chiefly women and children, who, after

³ “Historical Researches,” 181.

being detained a day or two at the king's house, were sent away to other parts for sale." ⁴

The Fellatahs, who, since the beginning of the nineteenth century, have been the dominators of the Nigritians in West Africa, used to carry on a merciless campaign against their subjects, destroying their homes and fields, and seizing women and children by the thousands to barter away to the West, or to send across the desert. Describing the effects of a Fellatah raid, Barth says: "The whole village, which only a few moments before had been the abode of comfort and happiness, was destroyed by fire and made desolate. Slaughtered men, with their limbs severed from their bodies, were lying about in all directions and made passers-by shudder with horror." ⁵

The slave traffic in the Sudan gave rise at a very early date to regular slave markets. The city of Jenné on the Niger was, in the middle ages, the greatest emporium in West Africa, far outshining Timbuktu. From the fifteenth century to the present time, the most celebrated slave markets have been Kuka, on Lake Chad, Timbuktu, capital of the Songhay empire, Kano, capital of the Hausa empire, and Katsena, capital of a district of the same name. Rohlfs found at the Kuka slave market, white haired old men and women, children suckling strange breasts, young girls and strong boys who had come from Bornu, Baghirmi, Hausa, Logun, Musgu, Waday and from lands still more distant. ⁶

The slaves were carried across the desert by two kinds of caravans. First, those composed of nomad tribes, which migrated periodically from north to south. During the winter the tribes would pasture their camels along the edges of the desert, but in the spring they would visit the cities in the oases to gather up a supply of dates and other desert products to sell in the north. They would then in the same season proceed north to the cultivated regions of the Atlas mountains and arrive there in the midst of the harvest, exchanging their southern commodities for grain, raw-wool,

⁴ "Narrative of an American Sailor," 55.

⁵ "Travels in North and Central Africa," II, 379.

⁶ "Reise von Mittelmeer nach dem Tshad-See," I, 344.

and a variety of European goods. At the end of the summer they would return to the south, arriving at the oases just as the dates were ripening. Here the grain, wool and other stuffs from the north would be exchanged for dates and manufactured articles of the desert. The same tribes which advanced from the oases of the desert to the north also descended towards the south, thus establishing intercourse between the Barbary States and Timbuktu. Many slaves picked up by these immigrating tribes were carried from one oasis to another until they were finally sold into the states bordering the Mediterranean.

The second kind of caravans were those conducted by merchants, traveling with hired camels, and making rapid and direct journeys across the desert to and from the chief slave markets. These caravans would come into the Sudan composed of men mounted upon camels, asses and mules, bringing salt, hides, cloth, and sundry articles from civilized North Africa, and return with slaves through Tibbu to Fezzan, and there fatten them for the Tripoli slave markets. Those that came to Timbuktu returned to any of the Barbary States, and there transferred their slaves to other traders who carried them as far as Turkey in Asia. Those that came to Kano usually passed out by way of Kuka or Katsena and proceeded thence by several routes to markets in North Africa.

The journey across the desert was exceedingly fatal to the blacks, since they were not accustomed to the northern climate. They suffered from hunger, thirst and cold, and a large per cent. of them perished along the way. Damberger, who traveled through the interior of Africa between 1781 and 1797, relates, as follows, his experience as a slave-captive in crossing the desert. Passing through the Sudan he fell in with some Moors, journeying to Tégorarin, where he was sold to a slave dealer, who resold him to a Mussulman en route to Mezzabath, a town on the river Oniwoh. Here again he was sold to a merchant who carried him to Marocco. He narrates that "On the 6th of September, my new master and I departed with the caravan. It consisted

of merchants from various nations, of persons of distinction, who had been performing a pilgrimage to Mecca, and of slaves. We proceeded slowly on our journey, as the roads were bad and our beasts were very heavily laden. Every day some of our company left the caravan, as we approached or passed the respective destinations. We traveled over mountains where the path was sometimes so narrow as only to permit the passage of one person at a time. We were constantly on the watch in these parts to prevent being surprised by the Arabs, as our caravan conveyed many valuable articles, which would have afforded rich plunder to those robbers. That which we apprehended actually happened on the seventh day after our departure, namely, on the 13th of Sept. A number of armed Arabs attacked us between the Cozul mountains and the river Tegtat; killed four of our slaves and three camels; and, though they lost several men in the attack, obstinately continued the combat. We defended ourselves to the utmost of our power, and at length had the good fortune to repel the whole troop. The victory, however, was not obtained till two of our merchants and five slaves were wounded, besides the four that were killed. We preserved all our property and the burthens of the slain camels were distributed among those that remained.”⁷

An account of the caravan traffic from Timbuktu is given by Jackson, who says that Timbuktu “has from time immemorial carried on a very extensive and lucrative trade with the various maritime states of North Africa, viz., Marocco, Tunis, Algiers, Tripoli, Egypt, etc., by means of accumulated caravans, which cross the great desert of Sahara, generally between the months of September and April inclusive; these caravans consist of several hundred loaded camels, accompanied by the Arabs who let them to the merchants for the transportation of their merchandise to Fez, Marocco, etc., and at a very low rate. During their routes they were often exposed to the attacks of the roving Arabs of Sahara who generally commit their depredations as they

⁷ “Travels Through the Interior of Africa,” 490.

approach the confines of the desert.”⁸ The wind sometimes rolls up the sand like great billows of the ocean, and caravans are often buried under the pile, and then the wind, shifting, scatters in the air those newly constructed mounds, and forms, amidst the chaos, dreadful gulfs and yawning abysses: the traveler, continually deceived by the aspect of the place, can discover his situation only by the position of the stars.

When the caravans reach Akka, on the northern border of the desert, the camels and the guides are discharged, and others hired to proceed to Fez, Marocco, etc. The trip across the desert is made in about 130 days, including the necessary stops. Caravans go at the rate of three and one half miles an hour, and travel seven hours a day. The convoys of the caravan usually consist of two or more Arabs belonging to the tribe through whose territory the caravan passes. When the convoys reach the limit of their country, they transfer the caravan to other guides, and so on till the desert is crossed. The individuals who compose the caravans are accustomed to few comforts. “Their food, dress and accommodation are simple and natural: proscribed from the use of wine and intoxicating liquors by their religion, and exhorted by its principles to temperance, they were commonly satisfied with a few nourishing dates and a draft of water; and they will travel for weeks successively without any other food.”⁹

The caravans from Timbuktu were wont to export to the Barbary States gold dust and gold rings, ivory, spices, and a great number of slaves. “A young girl of Haussa, of exquisite beauty,” remarks Jackson, “was once sold at Marocco, whilst I was there, for four hundred ducats, whilst the average price of slaves is about one hundred.”¹⁰ As to the cost of transporting the slaves, Jackson states that “Ten dollars expended in rice in Wangara is sufficient for a year’s consumption for one person; the wearing apparel

⁸ “An Account of the Empire of Morocco,” 282.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 288.

¹⁰ “Account of the Empire of Morocco,” 292.

is alike economical; a pair of drawers, and sometimes a vest, forming all the clothing necessary in traversing the desert.”¹¹

Gen. Daumas describes a journey he made from Katsena in the Sudan across the desert about the middle of the nineteenth century. Arriving at Katsena, he says that his caravan was met by a great and mixed crowd of Negroes, who crowded around the camels, speaking in the most animated manner their unknown language. He and his companions were assigned to a special quarter of the city, and provided with lodgings. The camels were put in charge of some poor men of the caravan who led them away every day to the pasture, brought them back at four or five o'clock in the evening, and placed them in the enclosure in the city. The caravan leaders paid their respects to the chief of the city who bade them welcome and promised them protection. The business proceeded leisurely, as it was customary for the caravans to remain there two months.

The chief, not having a sufficient supply of slaves on hand to trade, caused his big drums to be beaten, and organized two bands of troops to execute a raid among the heathen tribes to the east and southwest. The raiding bands attacked only tribes with whom they were at war, or who refused to adopt the Mohammedan religion. While the troops were on the warpath, the caravan leaders visited the city slave market and made, from day to day, a few purchases. The price paid for an old Negro was 10,000 to 15,000 cowries, an adult Negro 30,000, a young Negro woman 50,000 to 60,000, a Negro boy or girl 35,000 to 45,000. The seller agreed to take back, within three days of the date of the purchase, any slaves that proved to have objectionable qualities, such as a disease, bad eyes or teeth, or a habit of snoring in sleep. As a rule slaves that come below Nupé were not salable for the reason that, being unaccustomed to eat salt, it was difficult for them to withstand the regime of the desert. Also, slaves from certain countries south of Kano were not salable because they were can-

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 295.

nibals. The slaves from this region were recognized by their teeth which were sharpened to a point, resembling those of a dog. Negroes from other tribes were not purchased because they were believed to have the power of causing a man to die of consumption by merely looking at him. The purchase of Fellatahs, or pregnant Negro women, or Jews was strictly forbidden by the Sultan. The Fellatahs were not bought because they boasted of being white people. The Negro women could not be bought because the child to be born would be the property of the Sultan if its mother were a heathen, and it would be free if the mother were a Mohammedan. The Jew Negroes could not be bought because they were jewelers, tailors, artisans and indispensable negotiators.

The raiding troops, after having been on the campaign for nearly a month, returned with 2,000 captives, who marched in front of the column, the men, women, old and young, almost all nude, or half clad in ragged blue cloth, and the children piled upon the camels. The women were groaning, and the children crying, while the men, though seemingly more resigned, bore bloody marks upon their backs made by the whips. The convoy was marched to the palace, where its arrival was announced to the Sultan by a band of musicians. The Sultan complimented the chief, examined the slaves and ordered them to the slave market; and the next morning the caravan leaders were invited to come and make their purchases.

After the slave-trading was over, it was necessary to purchase supplies of corn, millet, dried meat, butter and flour for three months, also to purchase camels and hide-tents. Daumas's caravan, which set out from Metlily with only 64 camels and sixteen men, had now increased to 400 slaves and nearly 600 camels.

A caravan from Tuat, which had joined that of Daumas, had augmented in the same proportions. It had bought 1,500 slaves and its camels had increased to 2,000. These two caravans waited two days to be joined by three others which had penetrated farther to the south. It was desir-

able that all of the caravans recross the desert together in order better to resist attacks from the Tuaregs, Tibbus, and other highwaymen of that region.

The slaves had to be watched very closely, since believing that they were to be eaten by the white men, they were ready to take any chance of escaping. The women were tied in twos by the feet, and the men tied eight or ten together, each with his neck in an iron collar, to which was attached a short chain which held the hand of each slave at the height of his chest. At night Daumas fastened to his wrist the chains which bound all of his slaves together so that the least movement would wake him.

In a short time the three expected caravans arrived. One had originally come from Ghedames, one from Ghat and one from Fezzan. The first had gone as far as Nupé. It brought back 3,000 slaves and 3,500 camels. The second had gone to Kano and returned with 400 or 500 slaves and 700 or 800 camels. The third returned from Sokoto, and had about the same number of slaves and camels as the second.

After the proper ceremonies of farewell at the palace of the Sultan, the camels were loaded, and the children placed upon the baggage. The Negro men, chained together, were placed in the middle of each caravan, and the women were grouped eight or ten together, and guarded by a man with a whip. The signal was given, and the great combined caravans, consisting in all of about 6,000 slaves and 7,500 camels, started on their homeward march.

But suddenly there was a mighty noise of crying and groaning, of calling at each other and bidding farewell to friends. Some were so overcome at the fear of being eaten that they rolled upon the ground and absolutely refused to walk. Nothing could persuade them to get up until a guard came along with his great whip which brought blood at each lash. As the great army passed through the gate of the city, an officer of the Sultan examined every slave to be sure none was a Fellatah, Mohammedan, or Jew. The Ghat caravan happened to have among its slaves a

Fellatah, who was at once discovered and set free. At the first camp, says Daumas, "Each caravan established its bivouac separately, and as soon as the camels were crouched, and after having chained our Negro women by the feet and in groups of eight or ten, we forced our Negro men to aid us, with the left hand which we had left free, to unload our baggage, to arrange it in a circle and to stretch in the center the tents which we had brought from Katsena. Two or three of the oldest women that we had not put in chains, but who had always had their two feet fettered, were directed to prepare our supper. We ate in groups of four. This sad supper over, we placed the guards around our camp, and made the slave women and men sleep as before said." ¹²

The next day the caravans were obliged to stop in consequence of a Negro woman who gave birth to a child. This stop, however, was not very lengthy. In a few hours she and her infant were placed upon a camel and the caravan went forward. When the camp was pitched for the next night, the leader, in making his rounds, ordered that the young Negro mother be left unshackled, and that she be given some meat for supper and allowed to sleep warmly upon a mat. But during the night, when everything was quiet, the mother put her infant in a basket filled with ostrich feathers, placed it upon her head, and made her escape.

Next morning, upon discovering her flight, several bands of men were sent out in different directions to find her. One of these, after a few hours of search, found her in a thicket nursing her child. She was led back to the camp, and two gun-shots recalled the other bands, and the caravans then resumed their march. The caravans stopped at Aghezeur to replenish their provisions and make repairs; and up to that time none of the people had died, and only one camel was lost.

After a month's traveling they reached "Ogla d'As-saoua," which was a rendezvous for all the marauding

¹² "Le Grand Desert," 228.

bands that returned from the Sudan. It was particularly dangerous for the reason that it was the point at which groups of caravans divided and proceeded in different directions across the desert, and some of the independent caravans had to pass near the Tuareg nomads.

"None of our slaves," says Daumas, "I am sure, will ever forget this stop, for it was there that they were for the first time given their liberty after being in irons a month. The men and women danced all day after the fashion of their own country, until they fell prostrated with heat and fatigue. Even those whose legs and necks had been made sore from the chains took an active part in this fatiguing exercise, and all came to kiss our hands and to prostrate themselves at our feet and to sprinkle them with sand. We were careful not to interrupt this feast of good augury. It was the first proof to us that they had at last accepted their lot, and we had no longer to fear they would dream of escaping as they were so far from the Sudan and in the very middle of the desert. . . . From that day all were sincerely attached to us, and our joy was not less than theirs, for the continued watch which had been imposed upon us had been frightfully fatiguing. They helped us to load and unload our camels, to guide them en route, to stretch our tents, and to bring wood and water, labors which we alone had performed for a month. Finally we could lie down and sleep in peace."¹³ At an early hour the next morning the tents were folded and the several caravans parted company. One went eastward through Ghat to Ghedames, accompanied as far as Ghat by another whose wares were sold in Fezzan and to other caravans coming from Murzuk. Another went eastward directly to Fezzan, where its merchandise was to be distributed to points in Tunis, Tripoli and Egypt. Daumas and his companion caravan of Tuat struck out to the northwest for the oasis of Tuat.

Two thirds of the camels bought by Daumas in the Sudan died before he reached "Isalah" (Ain Salah?), as they could not stand the hardship of the journey, especially the

¹³ *Ibid.*, 251.

chilly and damp nights of the desert. Arriving at Metlily the Arab merchants repaired to a mosque and thanked God for His protection.

III. REGION OF NORTHWEST AFRICA AND THE DESERT OF SAHARA. HARDSHIP OF THE DESERT ROUTE

In 1850 Barth estimated the number of slaves carried across the desert from Kuka at 5,000 per annum, and in 1865 Rohlfs estimated the number at 10,000. A British Blue Book of 1873 estimated that the Mohammedan States of North Africa absorbed annually one million slaves.

The mortality in crossing the desert was frightful. Denham saw near a well in the Tibbu country 100 skeletons of Negroes who had perished from hunger and thirst. In his travels he saw a skeleton every few miles, and for several days he passed from sixty to ninety skeletons per day. Sometimes a whole caravan perished, consisting of as many as 2,000 persons and 1,800 camels. The Negroes composing the caravans often had to walk and carry heavy loads. Rohlfs says that if one did not know the route of their pilgrimage he could find the way by the bones that lie to the right and left of the path. When he was passing through Murzuk in 1865, he gave medical aid to a slave dealer who was very ill, and, in compensation, received a boy about seven or eight years old. The boy had traveled four months across the desert from Lake Chad. He knew nothing of his home country, had even forgotten his mother tongue, and could jabber only some fragments of speech picked up from the other slaves of the caravan. As a result of the long journey he was emaciated to a skeleton and so enfeebled that he could scarcely stand up. He crawled on all fours and kissed the hand of his new master, and the first words he uttered were "I am hungry." The boy prospered and followed Rohlfs to Berlin. Thomson, in his travels, mentions having met a caravan of forty slave-girls crossing the Atlas Mountains on its way to Marocco. "A few were on camel-back, but most of them trudged on foot, their appear-

ance telling of the frightful hardships of the desert route. Hardly a rag covered their swarthy forms." Morocco used to be the destination of most of the slaves transported across the desert. About twenty-five years ago the center of the traffic in that state was Sidi Hamed ibu Musa, seven days journey south of Mogador where a great yearly festival was held. The slaves were forwarded thence in gangs to different towns, especially to Morocco City, and Mequinez. Writing in 1897, Vincent says the slave trade is as active as ever at Mequinez and Morocco City. The slaves were sold on Fridays in the public markets of the interior, but never publicly at any of the seaports, owing to the adverse European influence. There is a large traffic at Fez, but Morocco City is the great mart for them, where one may see frequently men, women and children sold at one time. Marakesh was once a chief market in Morocco. In 1892 a caravan from Timbuktu reached that city with no less than 4,000 slaves, chiefly boys and girls whose price ranged from ten to fourteen pounds per head. As many as 800 were sold there within ten days to buyers from Riff, Taflett and other remote parts of the empire. A writer in the *Anti-slavery Reporter*, December, 1895, said: "Few people know the true state of affairs in Morocco; only those who live in daily touch with the common life of the people really get to understand the pernicious and soul-destroying system of human flesh-traffic as carried on in the public markets of the interior. Having resided and traveled extensively in Morocco for some seven years, I feel constrained to bear witness against the whole gang of Arab slave-raiders and buyers of poor little innocent boys and girls.

"When I first settled in Morocco I met those who denied the existence of slave-markets but since that time I have seen children, some of whom were of tender years, as well as very pretty young women, openly sold in the city of Morocco, and in the towns along the Atlantic seaboard. It is also of very frequent occurrence to see slaves sold in Fez, the capital of Northern Morocco.

"The first slave-girls that I actually saw being sold were

of various ages. They had just arrived from the Soudan, a distance by camel, perhaps, of forty days' journey. Two swarthy-looking men were in charge of them. The timid little creatures, mute as touching Arabic, for they had not yet learned to speak in that tongue, were pushed out by their captors from a horribly dark and noisome dungeon into which they had been thrust the night before. Then, separately, or two by two, they were paraded up and down before the public gaze, being stopped now and again by some of the spectators and examined exactly as a horse dealer would examine the points of a horse before buying the animal at any of the public horse-marts in England. The sight was sickening. Some of the girls were terrified, others were silent and sad. Every movement was watched by the captives, anxious to know their present fate. My own face blushed with anger as I stood helpless by and saw those sweet, dark-skinned, wooly-headed Soudanese sold into slavery.

"Our hearts have ached as we have heard from time to time from the lips of slaves of the indescribable horrors of the journeys across desert plains, cramped in pain, parched with thirst, and suffocated in panniers, their food a handful of maize. Again, we have sickened at the sight of murdered corpses, left by the wayside to the vulture and the burning rays of the African sun, and we have prayed, perhaps as never before, to the God of justice to stop these cruel practices."

Tunis and Algiers have also been great receptacles for the slaves of the Sudan. Describing the slave market at Tunis, Vincent says that it is a courtyard surrounded by arcades, the pillars of which are all of the old Roman fabrication. Around the court are little chambers or cells in which the slaves are kept, the men below, the women in the story above.

According to the statement of Barard, in 1906, Negro slavery is still prevalent throughout Morocco, and Negro women still populate the harems. "In the towns and plains, the present generations are pretty strongly colored by their

infusion of black blood. But the mountainous tribes who represent three fourths of a Maroccan population have kept themselves almost free from mixture; white or blond, they always resemble, by the color of their skin or texture of hair, the Europeans of Germany or France rather than the Mediterraneans of Spain and Italy." In Tunis the open sale of slaves is pretty well suppressed, but in a modified form the trade continues. Vivian says: "By resorting to fictitious marriages, and other subterfuges, the owner of a harem may procure as many slaves as he pleases, and, once he has got them into his house, no one can possibly interfere to release them. Slaves can, of course, escape and claim protection from the Consulates, but, as a matter of fact, they are generally quite contented with their position and know that such action would only involve them in ruin." In all of the Barbary States the slave trade is at the present time under prohibition, although it has not been effectively suppressed in any of them. According to a recent statement in the *Anti-slavery Reporter*, "a sale of slaves among which some white women and children were included, took place in a Fondak (an enclosure for accommodation of travelers and animals) in Tangier in April last (1906) and the sale was reported in a local newspaper, *Al Moghreb Al Aksa*." In July of the same year it was reported that a young black girl had been brought to the city and sold as a slave. The sultan had issued orders to the customs officers and at the various ports to prevent the transport of slaves by sea, and in event of any person discovered to be bringing slaves by sea, to punish him and free the slaves in his possession.

In July, 1906, the Anti-slavery Society of Italy published the particulars of a Turkish ship which left the port of Bengazi (Tripoli) for Constantinople with six slaves on board. Through the activity of the Society's agent the vessel was boarded and the slaves liberated.

Within the last decade the traffic in slaves across the desert has been limited to routes between the Niger and Marocco, and between Kuka and Tripoli. At the present

time there are probably no regular slave routes across the desert. Owing to the activity of European consuls in Northwest Africa caravans have a precarious existence and no safe markets.

"Only a few years ago," says the *Anti-slavery Reporter*, "Timbuctu, the famous trade metropolis of Central Africa, was also the most active center of the slave trade. French occupation (1894) has put an end to that traffic, and it is extending the *pax Gallica* throughout the vast and fertile territory of the Niger where formerly anarchy and brutality reigned." ¹⁴

JEROME DOWD,
Professor in the University of Oklahoma.

¹⁴ "Tunisia and the Modern Barbary Pirates," 65.